



Quick Notes

from the Idaho Office of Highway Safety

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General Message from the Highway Safety Manager

Hi Highway Safety Partners,

I hope your Thanksgiving was filled with friends, family, and good memories. I am very saddened to see the Idaho State Police press releases which shared that a number of families lost loved ones over this holiday. When I was in college, my close friend and roommate lost her father two days before Christmas from an accident involving a vehicle at a gas station. This will forever mar the Christmases for all of her family members, and I have not forgotten their tragedy that happened nearly 40 years ago. So I think of those that lost loved ones over this past weekend and wish it wasn't so.

Below is a press release that is very pertinent to Idaho. It reports on a recent study confirming that states that upgrade from a secondary to primary seat belt law show belt use gains of 10 to 12 percentage points. It also shows that states that increase the fine for a belt use violation from \$25, the national median, to \$60 show gains of 3 to 4 percentage points in belt use.

"Seat belts are the single most protective safety device ever invented for use in vehicles, saving thousands of lives each year. Now our research proves that when states step up sanctions, they're rewarded with huge improvements in belt use," said NHTSA Administrator David Strickland.

For perspective, Idaho's seat belt use rate was 78% in 2010. You can review it at <http://www.itd.idaho.gov/ohs/ClickIt/Surveys/obsrwd2010web.pdf>. Idaho's fine of \$10 is tied for the lowest fine in the country. Based on this study, if Idaho moved to a primary seat belt law, we could reach 90%, and a higher fine might get us to 94%. Many lives could be saved and serious injuries prevented.

Please take a moment to check out ITD's home page. Safety has a permanent location as you can see at <http://www.itd.idaho.gov/>. Scroll down a bit. From this link, you can find our Strategic Highway Safety Plan, our Office of Highway Safety home page, and many maps and data by district within Idaho.

Also on our above website is a link to ITD's 511 system which shares road conditions to help people make wise driving choices before leaving home. Our system has grown since 2005 to become one of the best rural 511 systems in the country. Recent improvements reflect our commitment to making it even better and more responsive to the needs of Idahoans.

Take care and please remind your friends and family to make smart driving choices on these icy roads.

Mary

U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood Unveils Study Showing Dramatic Gains in Seat Belt Use from Tougher Laws and Stiffer Fines

NHTSA 15-10, Tuesday, November 23, 2010

In urging Americans to buckle up and drive safely over the Thanksgiving holiday, U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood today released new research that shows that states that strengthen belt laws and increase fines for unbuckled motorists see substantially increased seatbelt use.

“We want everyone to have a safe and happy holiday travel season,” said Secretary LaHood. “For the sake of your loved ones and everyone else on the road, please remember to buckle up and put away your cell phone every time you get behind the wheel.”

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) study confirms that states that upgrade from a secondary to primary seat belt law show belt use gains of 10 to 12 percentage points. It also shows that states that increase the fine for a belt use violation from \$25, the national median, to \$60 show gains of 3 to 4 percentage points in belt use. Those that raise the penalty to \$100 show 6 to 7 percent point gains.

Because many states have passed tougher seat belts laws and stiffer fines, unbuckled motorists could face more severe penalties if caught.

“Seat belts are the single most protective safety device ever invented for use in vehicles, saving thousands of lives each year. Now our research proves that when states step up sanctions, they’re rewarded with huge improvements in belt use,” said NHTSA Administrator David Strickland.

The research was based on surveys of seat belt use conducted by the states between 1997 and 2008. The surveys were done in accordance with NHTSA methodology.

To view the summary report click here http://www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/traffic_tech/TT400.pdf

To view the report in its entirety click here

http://www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/nti/occupant_protection/pdf/811413.pdf

Happy Birthday Airbags

Although perhaps not as influential as the seatbelt, the airbag’s contribution to vehicle safety is significant – and when combined with a safety harness unparalleled in terms of saving lives and reducing injury. Here, we look back at Daimler’s developmental work and learn how the humble airbag will be saving lives for many years to come.

Thirty years ago, the first series-production car equipped with an airbag left the Mercedes-Benz assembly line in Sindelfingen – an S-Class Saloon. This brought to an end more than 13 years of development time for the first driver airbag at Mercedes-Benz, and with it the dawn of new era in vehicle safety.

According to the US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), to date the airbag has saved more than 28,000 lives in the USA alone. Mercedes-Benz insists it made the innovation available in series-production cars long before other manufacturers, and has meanwhile equipped millions of vehicles with this protective system. Since October 1992, a driver airbag has been standard equipment in all passenger cars bearing the Mercedes star. Here’s the link to the full story - <http://www.traffictechnologytoday.com/features.php?BlogID=448>.